THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • TUESDAY • AUGUST 20, 2024 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

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NEPAL TO EXPORT CLOSE TO 1,000 MW OF POWER TO INDIA, SAYS JAISHANKAR

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar called it a new milestone after holding talks with his Nepalese counterpart Arzu Rana Deuba in Delhi

251 MW TO BE SOURCED FROM 12 PROJECTS

Nepal was already exporting 690 megawatts (MW) of electricity from 16 hydropower projects to India. Now, an additional 251 MW of power, sourced from 12 hydropower projects, will be exported, taking the total power exports to India to 941 MW. Nepal exported electricity worth more than ₹10 billion to India in the last fiscal, a statement said

POWER EXPORTS TO INDIA GROW 24 TIMES

- Nepal's electricity exports to India began in October 2021 when New Delhi approved the import of 39 MW. In less than three years, this figure has grown over 24 times, the Indian Embassy in Nepal said
- "Glad to note that Nepal will be exporting close to 1,000 MW of electricity to India, a new milestone," Jaishankar wrote on X

10,000 MW

OF POWER TO BE EXPORTED BY NEPAL OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS, AS PER AN AGREEMENT

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VELLIPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Calcutta High Court lawyers stage a protest against the alleged sexual assault and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar College and Hospital, in Kolkata on Monday | PTI

Intimidation steps up protests

TMC MP seeks HC protection; top docs appear for police questioning after leading march

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kolkata

WITH the streets of Kolkata continuing to see protests by people from all walks of life against the horrific rape and murder of a PG student at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MP Sukhendu Sekhar Ray on Monday moved the Calcutta High Court fearing arrest, and two leading doctors faced police questioning for allegedly spreading misinformation on social media.

The CBI continued interrogation of former RG Kar principal Sandip Ghosh for the fourth straight day and also prepared for a polygraph test on Sanjoy Roy, a civic volunteer arrested in the case. The CBI got a local court approval for the lie detector test, days after performing a psychoanalysis test on him.

RG Kar ex-principal Sandip Ghosh

TRANSFER RACKET

A senior CBI officer said, "a racket of transfer-posting of doctors was functioning at RG Kar. The going rate for each transfer was around ₹20-30 lakh. The victim protested against the illegal system in various forums."

Prepare a module/scheme for protection of doctors and medical service personnel against any violence in the hospitals — Delhi Medical Association plea to SC, which will hear case the suo motu at 10.30 am today

"I have moved Calcutta High Court against the illegal notice of the police, intimidation and high-handedness. The matter is likely to be heard on Tuesday," the MP said.

On Sunday, the police summoned Ray, a three-time member of the Upper House, for his post on X, which said: "CBI must act fairly. Custodial interrogation of Ex Principal and Police Commissioner is a must to know who and why floated suicide story. Why wall of hall demolished, who patronised Roy to be so powerful, why sniffer dog used after 3 days.100s of such questions."

Senior doctors Kunal Sarkar and Subarna Goswami responded to another crackdown attempt by the police for posting about the incident on social media. They led a march of hundreds of healthcare professionals from Calcutta Medical College to Kolkata Police headquarters, before they appeared for questioning.

Doctors on strike tied black rakhis as a mark of protest. In various parts of the state, women tied black rakhis to their brothers. Artists gathered at the Academy of Fine Arts for a protest rally and lawyers of the Calcutta High Court joined them.

Governor C V Ananda Bose said, "In West Bengal, democracy is degenerating... Today, we have to take a pledge to protect our daughters or sisters. This society should become a place where women feel happy and secure. We have failed in our mission to our sisters. This is the time for all men to correct themselves."

RELIEF TO CM

HC tells spl court to defer MUDA case till Aug 29

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a temporary relief to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the High Court of Karnataka on Monday directed the special court trying cases against sitting and former MPs/MLAs in the city to defer its proceedings till August 29, the next date of hearing, and, till then, not to precipitate matters over the complaints filed.

The complainants sought directions to order a probe against the chief minister in the alleged MUDA scam where his wife Parvathy BM was allotted 14 sites a few years ago.

On August 17, Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot accorded sanction to prosecute the CM. Justice M Nagaprasanna passed the interim order after hearing arguments of senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi in favour of Siddaramaiah, who challenged the governor's sanction granted to prosecute him, and Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta for the governor, Advocate General Shashikiran Shetty and the senior counsels representing the complainants before the special court and a caveator.

CONTINUED ON: P5

I am pleased that the Hon'ble High Court heard the matter and passed an interim order directing the special court to defer the proceedings and further instructing that no precipitative action be taken pursuant to the impugned sanction. I am confident that ultimately the truth will prevail.

Siddaramaiah

Congressmen confront police personnel during a protest against Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot in Bengaluru on Monday | ALLEN GEGNIUS J

Cong MLC's B'desh barb sparks row

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mangaluru/Bengaluru

CONGRESS MLC Ivan D'souza's remarks on Monday that Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot will meet a Bangladesh-like situation if he did not withdraw the sanction given to prosecute CM Siddaramaiah in MUDA sites' scam, led to a controversy with BJP seeking action against him. P6

Now, CRPF officer killed in poll-bound Udhampur

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) inspector was killed in a terrorist attack in assembly election-bound Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Monday.

A police official said terrorists attacked an area domination patrol team comprising the local police and CRPF personnel at Chill in Dudu area of Udhampur.

The security forces returned the fire, and in the ensuing gunfight CRPF inspector Kuldeep Kumar of the 187th battalion sustained bullet injuries, the official said. Kumar was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he succumbed to injuries.

Udhampur will go to polls on October 1, the final phase of the three-phase elections.

Soon after the attack, additional troops reached the area and a massive manhunt was launched to track down the terrorists with the help of drones and sniffer dogs.

Monday's attack comes five days after terrorists and security forces engaged in a series of gun battles in a day-long encounter in the dense Akar forest area of the neighbouring Doda district during which an Army captain was killed.

Earlier, on August 11, two soldiers and a civilian were killed in an encounter in a remote area in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

On July 16, four Army personnel, including a captain, died after being injured in a gunfight with heavily armed terrorists in a forest area of the Doda district of J&K.

There has been a sudden surge in terror attacks in the Jammu region in which over a dozen security personnel, mostly from the Army were killed. The militants have changed their strategy and are resorting to jungle warfare and hit and run attacks along forest areas. About 4000 more troops including 500 elite para commandos have been deployed.

Dancer took advantage of rape survivor waiting for ride

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A choreographer, who was arrested on Sunday evening for allegedly raping a BBA student, committed the crime after taking advantage of the situation where she panicked after the car in which she was travelling with her male friend met with an accident and she started walking alone trying to hitch a ride, according to the police.

The HSR Layout police arrested Mukeshwaran alias Mukesh (24) of SR Nagar near Adugodi for allegedly raping the student after offering her a drop in the wee hours of Sunday. Mukesh, who hails from Tamil Nadu, came to Bengaluru in 2003. He has no criminal antecedents, the police said.

DCP (Southeast) Sarah Fathima said Mukesh was produced before a city court on Monday and remanded in police custody. The DCP said Mukesh was traced based on the registration number of his scooter. The CCTV footage in the vicinity where the crime took place and the clues given by the victim helped in nabbing him. "Mukesh was arrested from his house. Investigations revealed that he was partying with his friends in a Koramangala pub on Sunday night. On his way home, he noticed the victim trying to hitch a ride. Taking advantage, Mukesh approached her and offered to drop her home. But he took her to a remote place and raped her," he said.

Meanwhile, the Adugodi traffic police have booked a case in connection with the accident in which the car driven by the victim's friend hit an autorickshaw near a mall in Koramangala.

No licensing regime for OTT apps: Govt

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

THE government has decided not to bring over-the-top (OTT) communication apps such as WhatsApp, Skype, and Telegram under the licensing regime. According to sources, the exclusion of OTT apps from the consultation process during the formation of the Telecom Bill makes it impossible to subject them to any licensing.

The Cellular Operators Association of India, which represents Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea, has been pushing for the inclusion of OTTs under the licensing regime, citing similarities in the services offered. However, several industry bodies, including the Internet & Mobile Association of India, Nasscom, Broadband India Forum, and the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum have cautioned against this move.

The Telecommunication Bill 2023, which proposed various changes in the telecom sector, was passed in both Houses of Parliament in December 2023. However, there was confusion whether the bill would cover OTT services. Later, the then communication minister Ashwini Vaishnaw clarified that OTTs are regulated by the Information Technology Act, and the process will continue to stay that way.

BONDS OF UNITY

A student ties a 'rakhi' to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during Raksha Bandhan celebrations with school children in New Delhi on Monday | PTI

MODI TO VISIT WAR-HIT UKRAINE ON AUGUST 23

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

NARENDRA Modi will travel to Kyiv and hold talks with President Vlodomyr Zelenskyy on August 23, in the first visit by an Indian prime minister to Ukraine since 1992.

Modi's visit comes a day ahead of the Ukraine National Day, which falls on August 24. It also comes weeks after he visited Russia and held talks with President Vladimir Putin, drawing criticism from Zelenskyy.

"Prime Minister's engagements in Kyiv will touch a range of aspects of bilateral ties," a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs said. The two leaders are also likely to discuss the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. India has always been advocating diplomacy and dialogue to resolve the conflict, Tanmaya Lal, Secretary (West), the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), said.

Before visiting Ukraine, Modi will travel to Poland and hold talks with Prime Minister Donald Tusk. Modi is also expected to interact with the Indian community in Poland. The visit, the first by an Indian PM in 45 years, comes as Poland and India mark 70 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Rampant sexual abuse in Mollywood: Panel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ TPuram

HEMA PANEL REPORT

CASTING couch, sexual harassment, blackmailing, unofficial ban, gender discrimination, lack of basic facilities including toilets and changing rooms, rampant alcohol and drug abuse, denial of roles and remuneration, and lack of a proper legal system to address the problems are some of the key issues faced by women working in the Malayalam film industry. According to the Justice Hema Committee, constituted to look into harassment faced by women in the field, the industry is controlled by a group of 10-15 men. This powerful lobby, which the report terms 'mafia', can impose unofficial bans and banish anyone.

Almost five years after the committee submitted it, the Kerala government released the report on Monday under the RTI Act, after a slew of legal battles before the State Information Commission and the Kerala High Court.

The three-member panel, headed by Justice K Hema, had former IAS officer K B Valsalakumari and veteran actor Sarada as its members. The government released a 233-page report after removing close to 65 pages from the original document, which is based on testimonies of more than 50 professionals, including actors and technicians. The most important finding of the panel is about an all-male power group. It says these individuals are prominent persons who are at the forefront of the Malayalam film industry. "Certain actors in cinema (some of them are also producers, distributors, exhibitor or directors) — all male — gained enormous fame and wealth and they are in full control the whole industry now," the report said.

At the behest of this group, many individuals, including famous actors, were banned from cinema. Offending any member of the group, even for a silly reason, could invite a ban. "If a member from the power group is not pleased with someone in cinema (be he/she an actor, producer, director or anyone in cinema, however efficient), because of even personal prejudice, all the members of the power group join hands, and such a person is prevented from working in cinema," it added.

The report noted that members of the Women in Cinema Collective (WCC) are being targeted for the simple reason that they protested against atrocities in the industry. The panel said there should be a forum to address the issues. P5

Two visually challenged students fall on Metro tracks, escape unhurt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

TWO visually challenged students escaped unhurt after they fell on the tracks of Platform 3 of Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Interchange Metro Station on Monday afternoon.

With guide canes in their hands, they stepped into the tracks mistaking them to be the platform floor, said one of them.

A top official said this was the first incident involving visually challenged persons after Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited commenced operations in October 2011. S Yogesh, 22, M Bhuvan, 18, and Ravikumar, 20, visually challenged students from Bengaluru, took a Green Line train from Jayanagar station to Attiguppe. Bhuvan, a first-year BCom student of Vijaya College, and Yogesh, who is doing a computer course at Dr Reddy's Foundation, fell into the tracks after getting down at Nadaprabhu Kempegowda. Ravikumar is a final year BBA student of St Paul's College. P2

EXPRESS READ

US: Israel supports truce plan, Hamas must do too

Tel Aviv: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Israel has accepted a bridging proposal for a ceasefire and hostage release in Gaza, and called on Hamas to do the same. He spoke Monday after holding a hour meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "This is a decisive moment, probably the best, maybe the last opportunity to get the hostages home, to get a ceasefire," Blinken said.